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Examiner & Chronicle**EXAMINER**

	Sec.	Page
Auctions	II	15
Bridge	II	5
Business	III	7-11
Comment		

CHRONICLE

	Sunday Punch
Caen	Page 1
Delaplane	Page 5
Editorial	Page 1
Henne	Page 1



Newspaper—James Gould



Chronicle's Newhall, Examiner's Gould: A split personality on Sunday

Sex, Sin and Synergism

As the promotion copy touts it, San Francisco advertisers and newspaper readers are getting a "synergistic" reaction for their money—"the simultaneous action of separate agencies which, together, have greater total effect than the sum of their individual effects."

But to many, the chemistry has produced confusion. The de Young family's Chronicle and Hearst's Examiner—which merged into a jointly owned corporation seven months ago—continue as rivals six days a week; but on Sundays, there is total schizophrenia. The new combine's page one masthead reads, San Francisco Examiner & Chronicle. On the same page, the index is headed, San Francisco Sunday Examiner & Chronicle. And the index itself is split in two. The editorials of both papers appear on separate pages. In New York City, where a similar merger is under way (story right), editors are looking toward San Francisco apprehensively. As of now, New York's new Sunday World Journal and Tribune plans only one editorial page, but the paper will be schizoid in other departments.

Spark: San Francisco's Sunday paper is largely a patchwork of wire copy and syndicated features threaded only occasionally by locally generated stories. More than 50 columns lean on each other. Two editors oversee this profusion of copy. But, as if determined to maintain a split personality, the Sunday paper has no over-all editor.

If the product often seems bizarre, so can working for it. To keep the spark of competition alive, Chronicle executive editor Scott Newhall posted a notice in the paper's third-floor city room just after the merger, warning that any staff member found on the second floor, where the Examiner was to set up its city room, would be fired. Because of many delays, however, the opportunities for city-room espionage have been limited until this week, when the Examiner editorial side finally makes the three-block move from its old building. "Production and distribution problems are still plaguing us," acknowledges Examiner publisher Charles Gould. "We're still fighting typographical errors and we have make-up problems."

Since moving from the morning into the afternoon field following the merger, the Examiner slowly has improved; local political coverage is now more extensive and typography more readable. The Chronicle, on the other hand, has been playing up sex as if it were discovered yesterday. For weeks, page one has carried banner headlines such as **INSIDE A NUDE PARTY, A NUDE MODEL'S STORY** and **THE 'IT' LOOK IN SEX**. Last week, an eight-column streamer read **STEWARDESS 'SECRETS'** with the overline, **Cupcakes in the Sky**. "He reached up and playfully patted that portion of her nearest him," the article pants. "She admonished: 'Watch it! I have been,' he replied, 'ever since take-off.'"

The 52-year-old Newhall, 31 years on

the paper, sees nothing wrong with the stories. "I consider the social habits of the population as being perfectly respectable news," he says. "The Chronicle is more in touch with contemporary culture and behavior patterns than any paper in this country."

'Contempt': Though lurid, sensational journalism has lost much of its sales pull throughout the country, San Francisco may be an exception. Chronicle officials claim that when the paper gave big play to a party of the East Bay Sexual Freedom League, circulation jumped 10,000. Nevertheless, some San Franciscans are fed up. "The Chronicle has vast contempt for its readership," says one former employee, who now gets most of his news from the comprehensive San Jose Mercury, published 40 miles to the southeast, and from The Los Angeles Times. "There's one nice thing," says another San Franciscan. "You can read everything in the weekday in two minutes. The Sunday paper takes five minutes and it frees you to watch TV."

Before the merger last fall, the Examiner and the Chronicle, battling one another in the morning field, were both losing money. Now, having set themselves up in noncompetitive fields in the morning and afternoon and having lopped off 800 employees, the financial picture is better. From a pre-merger weekday circulation of 361,527, the Chronicle has jumped to nearly 500,000. The Examiner is down from a pre-merger 303,092 to about 220,000. The total circulation of the two Sunday papers before the merger (more than 800,000) is about the same for the new combination. But the count that counts—ad lineage—tells the real story. Despite the conversion to a single paper, lineage on Sunday is down less than half. And on weekdays, both papers have gained for a combined total of more than 1 million. From an advertising standpoint, says one executive of the combination, "the merger is a tremendous success."